

The journey

The First Fleet left Portsmouth, England on 13 May 1787. The entire journey took 252 days (a little over 8 months). From England, the fleet sailed to Australia making stops in [Santa Cruz](#), [Rio de Janeiro](#) and [Cape Town](#). They arrived in [Botany Bay](#) in mid-January 1788.

The journey began with good weather so Captain Phillip decided to let the convicts up on deck. However the weather would become very hot and humid as the Fleet sailed through the tropics. Tropical rainstorms meant that the convicts could not exercise on deck during this time, as they had no change of clothes and no method of drying wet clothing. As a result, they were kept below deck in the foul, cramped holds.

Some convicts on the *Scarborough* planned a [mutiny](#) but were caught, but most convicts were well behaved.

On 3 June 1787, the fleet arrived at [Santa Cruz](#) at [Tenerife](#). Fresh water, vegetables and meat were brought on board. On 10 June they left to cross the Atlantic to [Rio de Janeiro](#). The weather was very hot and there were lots of storms. Many people became sick and there were lots of rats, bedbugs, lice, cockroaches and fleas. People were only allowed to drink three pints of water each day (about one and a half litres).

The fleet reached Rio de Janeiro on 5 August. The ships were cleaned and fixed. More water, clothing and lots of food was taken on board. The fleet left on 4 September and reached [Cape Town](#) on 13 October. They bought plants, seeds and animals to take to Australia. The animals included: two bulls, seven cows, one stallion, three mares, 44 sheep, 32 pigs, four goats and poultry. They left on 12 November.

From Cape Town it took the Fleet two months to reach Australia. Phillip took a few ships ahead to start building at Botany Bay. They arrived on 18 January 1788. The other ships arrived only two days after he did.

Food and drinks

Convicts were given two thirds of the amount normally provided for sailors. Each week a sailor was given:

- [Bread](#) (really a hard [biscuit](#)) - 7lbs
- Salt [pork](#) - 2 lbs, the salt stopped the meat from becoming rotten.
- Salt [beef](#) - 7 lbs
- [Peas](#) - 2 lbs
- [Oatmeal](#) - 3 lbs
- [Butter](#) - 6ozs
- [Cheese](#) - 3/4 lb
- [Vinegar](#) - 1/2 pint
- Water - 3 [quarts](#) each day

As well as this food, there was sometimes [rice](#), dried fish, and [soup](#). When the ships were in a harbour there was also fresh meat and [vegetables](#). Women and children

were given a slightly different list of food. Sick people were also given [wine](#) and [spirits](#).

When the Fleet arrived in Sydney, Arthur Phillip worked out they only had enough food for 49 weeks. He should have been given enough for two years.

Other supplies

The Fleet also took a number of animals, plants and seeds. The animals included [sheep](#), [pigs](#), [dogs](#), [cats](#), [goats](#), [turkeys](#), [geese](#), [ducks](#), [chickens](#), [pigeons](#), [horses](#), and [cattle](#). Plants and seeds included [coffee](#), [cocoa](#), [cotton](#), [bananas](#), [oranges](#), [lemons](#), [tamarinds](#), [guava](#), [prickly pear](#), eugenia or pomme rose, jalap, ipecacuanha, [figs](#), [bamboo](#), [sugar cane](#), esparto grass, [vines](#), [quinces](#), [apples](#), [pears](#), [strawberries](#), [oaks](#), myrtles, [rice](#), [wheat](#), [barley](#), and [maize](#). Some of this was brought from England, and the rest from when the Fleet stopped at [Rio de Janeiro](#) and [Capetown](#).

Arrival in Australia



A monument at Brighton-Le-Sands, Botany Bay in New South Wales commemorating the landing of the First Fleet. The monument has the names of most of those who arrived on the First Fleet.

The first ship, *Supply*, reached [Botany Bay](#) on 18 January [1788](#). Aboriginal people from the Cadigal tribe saw the First Fleet ships arrive. Phillip soon decided that this site, picked by Sir [Joseph Banks](#), was not suitable. It had poor soil, no safe place to leave the ships, and no drinking water. Phillip decided to go north to [Port Jackson](#). On 26 January the marines and convicts arrived at Sydney Cove. 1403 people left [Portsmouth](#). On the voyage 7 babies were born. 69 people died or left the ships. 1332 people landed in Port Jackson which is now known as [Sydney](#). It was a successful trip, as only 40 convicts had died. Phillip named the settlement Sydney after Lord Sydney, the British government's Home Secretary.

The following people were on board the ships:	Embarked at Portsmouth	Landed at Port Jackson
<u>Officials</u> and <u>passengers</u>	15	14
<u>Crew</u> of the ships	324	306
<u>Marines</u>	247	245
<u>Wives</u> and children of the marines	46	54
<u>Convicts</u> (men)	579	543
Convicts (women)	193	189
Children of convicts	14	22
Total	1418	1373

The Aboriginal people from the Eora nation lived in the Sydney area. They could not understand why the British wanted to own their land and make farms with fences. The British did not understand the Aboriginal people's way of living and there was a lot of fighting and many people died.